

## For Immediate Release

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### **Graduates of RRHA Self Sufficiency Program Receive More than \$160,000**

RICHMOND VA.--Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) is proud to announce the graduation of two (2) RRHA public housing residents and 10 RRHA voucher holders from RRHA's Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Program. As a part of RRHA's FSS Program, these graduates receive monies earned while enrolled in the program that are placed in escrow until successful completion of the Program. The total amount of escrow disbursed to 2023 and 2024 graduates is \$161, 962.25. Of the 12 total graduates from 2023 and 2024, six (6) of them chose to participate in a private graduation luncheon ceremony for family and friends on Saturday, December 7, 2024 at Saint Peter Episcopal Church. The total monies disbursed between these six is \$91,368.38.

RRHA Chief Executive Officer Steven Nesmith said, "We could not be prouder of these FSS program participants! The success of RRHA families is our priority and the Family Self Sufficiency Program is at the core of RRHA's mission to empower families in public housing and voucher holders to move from assistance to independence. In addition to the feeling of pride and accomplishment, the interest-bearing account gives graduates a nice nest egg that they can use as a springboard to continue their progress after graduation."

The FSS Program, which is funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development was established in 1990 as part of the National Affordable Housing Act. Administered by RRHA, the FSS Program is optional for families to participate and is designed to empower families who either live in public housing or receive Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) assistance by providing a platform to become self-sufficient. Participants enter a five-year contract, requiring the head of household to obtain employment and all family members to be free of cash welfare assistance 12 months prior to program graduation. Families enrolled in this program are supported at each level of their growth and development to financial independence. After enrolling, participants meet one-on-one with a program coordinator and get connected with the specific prerequisites they need for advancement. This may include job skills training, financial management education, or other supportive services that are necessary for their progression. Additionally, an interest-bearing account is established for them that they receive when they graduate from the program.

"Participants must set goals for what they would like to achieve, and implement a service plan," RRHA's Senior Vice President of Affordable Housing Corey Franklin , "The plan is their roadmap to success, and we provide trusted partners and resources. It is our belief that if you work the plan, it will work for you with teamwork and the effort of the participant."

Since 2019, a total of 31 persons have graduated from RRHA's FSS Program. Currently RRHA has 51 families participating in the FSS Program. There are 120 on the waiting list.

For questions concerning the FSS program and other RRHA programs and initiatives, contact RRHA's Customer Call Center at (804) 780-4200 or toll free at 1-833-750-7742 (RRHA).

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